

The background of the page is an abstract composition of bold, organic shapes. A large, bright yellow area occupies the top right corner, while a deep black shape dominates the center and left side. A vibrant red shape is visible in the bottom right, partially obscured by the black area. The overall effect is one of high contrast and dynamic energy.

DOMINICK LABINO



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DOMINICK LABINO

A Decade of Glass Craftsmanship
1964-1974

Pilkington Glass Museum

Victoria and Albert Museum

The Toledo Museum of Art

1974-1975



Dominick Labino

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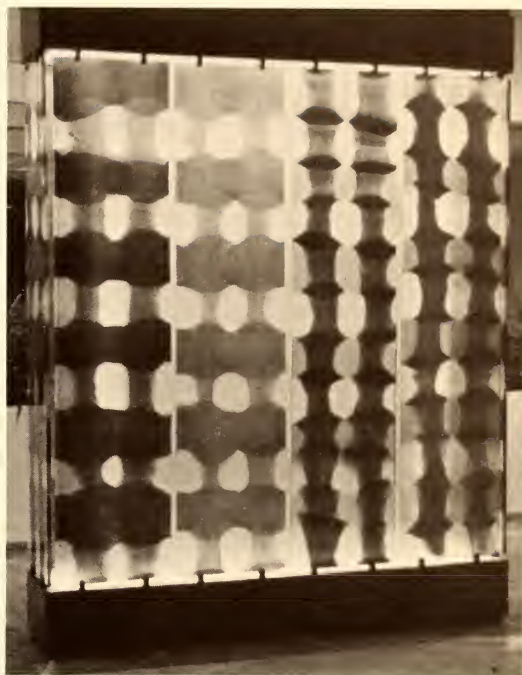
Dimensions: height precedes width.
All photographs by Ray Bossert, Toledo
except photograph of the artist, by Milton Zink.

PREFACE

Plans for this exhibition of representative glass by the American craftsman Dominick Labino over the past decade were initiated by Daniel E. Hogan, Curator of the Pilkington Glass Museum.

The exhibition was organized jointly by the Pilkington Glass Museum, St. Helens, Lancashire, England, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio. It will be shown in each of these Museums during 1974 and 1975.

The three museums express their appreciation and thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Labino for their generosity in lending the glass for this extended period, and to the Ohio Arts Council for its financial support of this catalogue.



Long-chain Molecules.
Cubic form of hot cast panels.
1973. 7' x 6'.
Johns-Manville Research and
Development Center, Denver, Colorado.

INTRODUCTION

I have been impressed with the work of Dominick Labino from the very first moment that I saw examples of his glass in 1966. I made my mind up then that someday I would bring an exhibition of his work to England.

A pioneer, Dominick Labino has helped and advised many craftsmen to develop and perfect their art. His use of color and the free form of his pieces mirror an eclectic imagination and dextrous skill.

He is a scientist with the talent of a great craftsman—a unique man making unique glass.

*Daniel E. Hogan, Curator
Pilkington Glass Museum*



*Vitrana.
Mural of hot cast panels.
1970. 7'4" x 8'8".
The Toledo Museum of Art.*

THE ART OF DOMINICK LABINO

In 1962 The Toledo Museum of Art offered a seminar-workshop in glassblowing. It was appropriate that it should have been offered in Toledo as this American city in northern Ohio is the headquarters of four major glass companies, and its Museum is world-famous for its extensive historic collections of glass.

What was extraordinary, however, about this seminar was that it was offered by a former Toledo Museum ceramics instructor to a small group of practicing potters, none of whom had ever before blown glass.

The Toledo seminar under the direction of Harvey Littleton, then a faculty member of the University of Wisconsin, constructed an elementary furnace. In its early attempts to melt glass the group, familiar only with pottery kilns fired at low temperature, sought the expert advice of Dominick Labino, then a vice-president and Director of Research and Development for the Glass Fibers Division of Johns-Manville Corporation. Labino, an engineer-inventor and holder of over 60 patents on industrial glass processes, had taken avocational art courses at the Museum, and he responded willingly to the group's dilemma.

He not only provided a glass formula and marbles capable of melting at a practical temperature, but also at his suggestion the furnace was converted from small hand-thrown pots to a tank furnace. A retired industrial glassblower, Harvey Leafgreen, showed the group how to blow glass. This seminar came to an end with few tangible results, but with a knowledge that glass could be melted and blown with furnaces and equipment simple enough for use by an artist-craftsman.

Out of this pioneering effort and several succeeding seminars at Toledo came a rapidly growing interest in glass-craftsmanship which has resulted in glassblowing courses now offered by approximately 50 schools, colleges and universities in our country. In 1969 Toledo's glass companies built for the Museum a fine new building especially for the teaching of glassblowing and the Museum has continued to offer adult courses in this field.

The most remarkable result of that first seminar, however, was that Dominick Labino, the successful industrial engineer, became so interested in the possibilities of glass-craftsmanship that a year later, in 1963, he built a special building on a farm he owned in Grand Rapids, Ohio, to house glass-furnaces of his own construction. Two years later, in 1965, he requested retirement from his company at the early age of 54 so that he could devote full-time to his own work in glass-craftsmanship. The results of a decade of this work—from 1964 to 1974—can be seen in the illustrations which follow, a selection of 70 pieces from his extensive, varied and creative production.

Because of his scientific and practical engineering experience Labino formulates all of his own glass compositions. He has been able to develop methods of working molten glass and fusing colors in the molten state which are unique. It is significant that he has continued to act as a technical and scientific consultant to various glass companies and to several federal agencies including the National Space Agency. Three of his glass fiber developments have served as insulation against the extreme temperatures encountered by the Apollo space capsules.

However, it is Labino's aesthetic accomplishment which is the subject of this exhibition. His restless creativity is evident in the varied colors, surface textures, forms, hollows and spatial relationships, and inner veils which occur throughout his work. The essential inventiveness of this man has resulted in never ending variety. His thrusts in new directions seem to be carried on at the same time as variations on earlier themes. The inherent qualities of glass are exploited with great technical virtuosity. Translucent or opaque, multicolored or plain, his glass forms are always fluid, complementary to the special nature of the material. These forms vary greatly; some are "useful" shapes such as bowls, vases, chalices, cruets or plates; others are non-functional abstract shapes such as sculptures, panels or paperweights. In every case, however, it is the essential quality of the glass which predominates. However, the "useful" shapes are not always useful, as their forms are often only an excuse for the aesthetic development of texture and color, which often appears to develop almost independently from the molten mass.

The highly sophisticated techniques of the artist, some unique to him, belie the apparent ease and flow of his forms. The extraordinary shapes of his hollow interior forms, which give flashing light to his pieces, the range of intensities of color in his fused multicolored forms, often contained in clear glass casing, his varied surface qualities which create broken reflective lights or light-absorbing matte textures are the work of a craftsman thoroughly familiar with the properties of glass, able to manipulate these properties with a complete control only possible because of Labino's unique combination of scientific knowledge and aesthetic inventiveness.

Labino's greatest contribution however is his glorious color. No other glass-craftsman has achieved such extraordinary color-relationships, or subtle variations of tones. Indeed, few artists in this field are able to combine colors in their molten state for the technical reason that different colors react differently in the furnace in accordance with minor changes in temperature and oxygen. They also tend to cool at different rates, often causing inevitable breakage during the annealing process. Labino's inherent feeling for color has of course provided the impetus for its aesthetic use in his glass.

While color occurs in the three-dimensional objects, it is the glass panels which best illustrate the relationship of color and form established in the molten glass. During the construction in 1969 of a new gallery to house the Toledo Museum's extensive collection of historical glass, Labino was invited to create a glass mural at the gallery's entrance. Although he had at that time never even made a glass panel, much less a mural approximately 9' square, it is characteristic of the artist that he accepted the challenge without question. The opportunity to work closely with the artist during this development gave me an unparalleled opportunity to observe his methods. An entirely new technique of casting molten glass into panels had to be developed. Combinations of colors to create abstract forms and textures presented new technical problems. It was necessary to find new solutions to prevent cracking of the panels during cooling. New and larger annealing ovens to carefully control the cooling process had to be developed.

Labino solved these problems, and over a period of more than a year he made more than 100 panels from which were chosen the 33 panels which comprise the Toledo Museum mural that was given to the Museum by Mr. and Mrs. Labino at the opening of the Museum's Glass Gallery in 1970.

Subsequently, Labino has executed other glass murals for Columbus (Ohio) Gallery of Fine Arts (1971) and for Riverside Hospital (Toledo) in 1973. Most recently he has completed a large cubic form involving ten glass panels 80 inches high by 18 inches wide, 3/4 inches thick, each weighing 100 pounds for a new Research and Development building of Johns-Manville Corporation in Denver, Colorado — an extraordinary technical achievement for a craftsman who had blown his first piece of glass only ten years before.

The illustrations which follow comprise examples of the glass-craftsmanship of Dominick Labino over the first decade of his work, 1964-1974. What will follow in the productive years to come is of course unknown. It would be fair to predict, however, that the work of this restless, inventive artist will continue to evolve in new and unexpected ways. More than 40 year's experience with glass and a life-long pattern of innovation can only lead to Labino's continuing development of a craft which has changed very little in essential technique in more than 4000 years, yet which is as new as the material developed by Labino for use in man's flights to the moon.

*Otto Wittmann, Director
The Toledo Museum of Art*



1. Marbleized glass.
Applied heavy foot and rim.
1964. 7" x 3½".



2. Chrome green opalescent glass,
clipped and tooled decoration.
1965. 6" x 6".



4. Triplicate.

Copper opal glass, cut and tooled design.
1966. $6\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5".

3. Pale cobalt and silver color variant,
applied prunts.

1965. $10\frac{1}{4}$ " x 6".



5. Copper-silver-and gold glass,
applied prunts.
1966. 5¼" x 5".



6. Silver glass,
overlapping prunts and iridescent surface.
1967. 6½" x 5".



7. Opalescent silver glass
with feathered cobalt
trailing encased.
1967. 7½" x 2".



8. Swirling design
encased in green glass.
1967. 2½" x 15".



9. Silver schmelzglas tooled to form design,
and cased with colorless glass.
1968. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".



10. Paperweight bottle.
Hot-worked design encased.
1967. 7" x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".



11. Colorless glass with
cross-trailing of silver schmelzglas.
1968. 6" x 5".



12. *The Spirit of Glass.*
Cadmium orange glass,
with air sculpture enclosures.
1968. 4½" x 3".



13. Golden amber glass with
cut and tooled relief.
1968. 7" x 4".



14. Inner cobalt blue form
reflected from concave surfaces.
1968. 6" x 3½".



*15. Copper blue glass with
air sculpture enclosures.
1968. 6" x 4½".*

*16. U.F.O.
Hot-cast panel.
1968. 14" x 14".*





17. *Gold-ruby glass with color variant.*
1968. 3" x 6".



18. *Silver schmelzglas with swirling colors.*
1968. 4" x 7½".

19. *Pale cobalt blue
with applied droplets
of dark cobalt.*
1968. 5½" x 4½".







21. Pale green glass with air sculpture
enclosures and gold veiling.
1969. $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $3\frac{1}{4}$ ".



22. Copper glass with seven rings of color.
1969. $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8".

20. Demon
Hot-cast panel.
1969. 18" x 14".



23. *Break-Through.*
Hot-glass sculpture.
1970. 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 5".



24. *Pale cobalt blue glass
with multi-color design encased.*
1970. 8" x 7".



25. *Anatomie
Surréaliste.*
Hot-cast panel.
1969. 18" x 14".



26. Iridescent surface with
fire polished prunts.
1970. 6½" x 4".



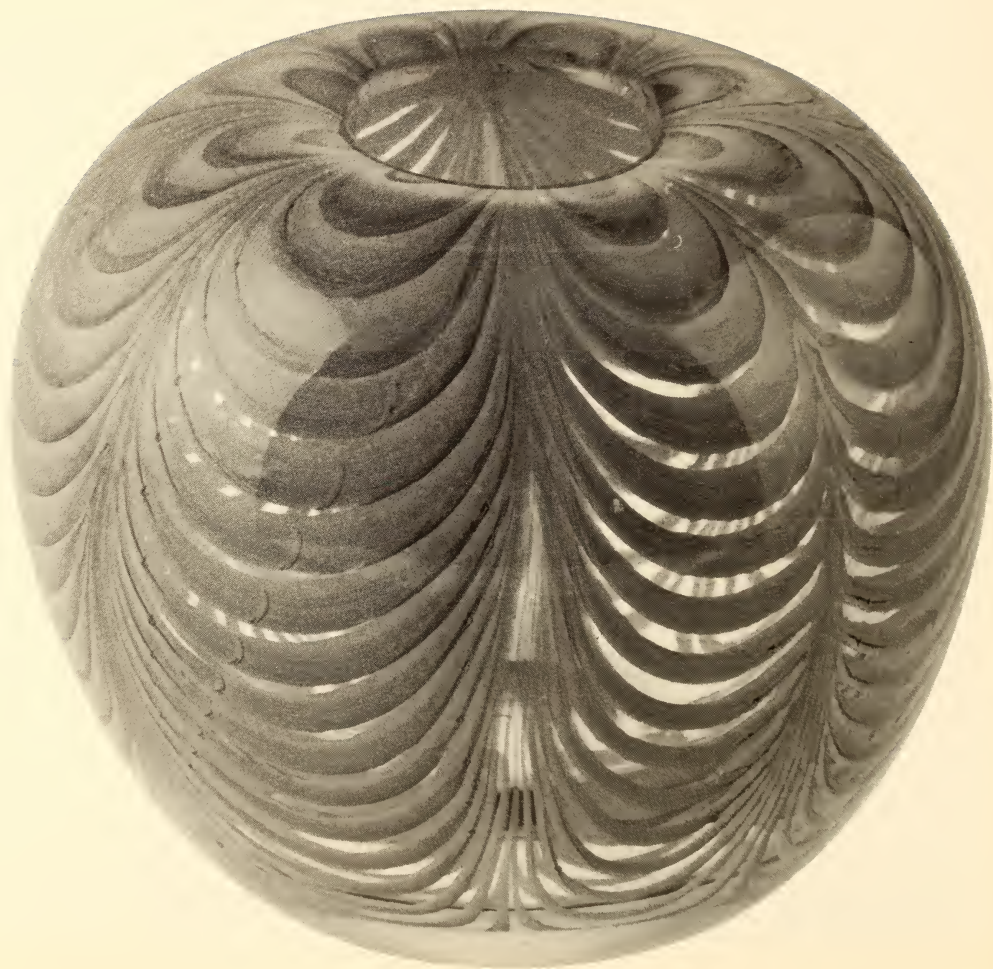
27. Pale blue glass,
hot-tooled design encased.
1971. 7" x 3".



28. *Vertical bands of white, yellow, orange,
and red encased in colorless glass.*
1971. 3" x 5".

29. *Re-entry.*
Hot-cast panel.
1971. 18" x 14".







31. Bottle with bubbled cobalt and
air form enclosure. Stopper.
1971. 6" x 3½".



32. Cruet. Copper glass with color
variant from base. Sculptured surface.
1971. 7" x 4".

30. Colorless glass,
festooning encased.
1971. 4" x 4½".



33. Colorless glass with
cross-trailing yellow glass encased.
1972. $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ ".



34. Burgundy glass with flower forms
on an iridescent surface.
1972. 4" x 4".

35. Spatial Movement.
Hot glass sculpture.
1972. $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x 9".





36. *Pale manganese glass with
multi-color design encased.*
1972. 8" x 5½".



37. Feathered trailing on opaque white glass and cased in colorless glass. 1972. 8" x 3".

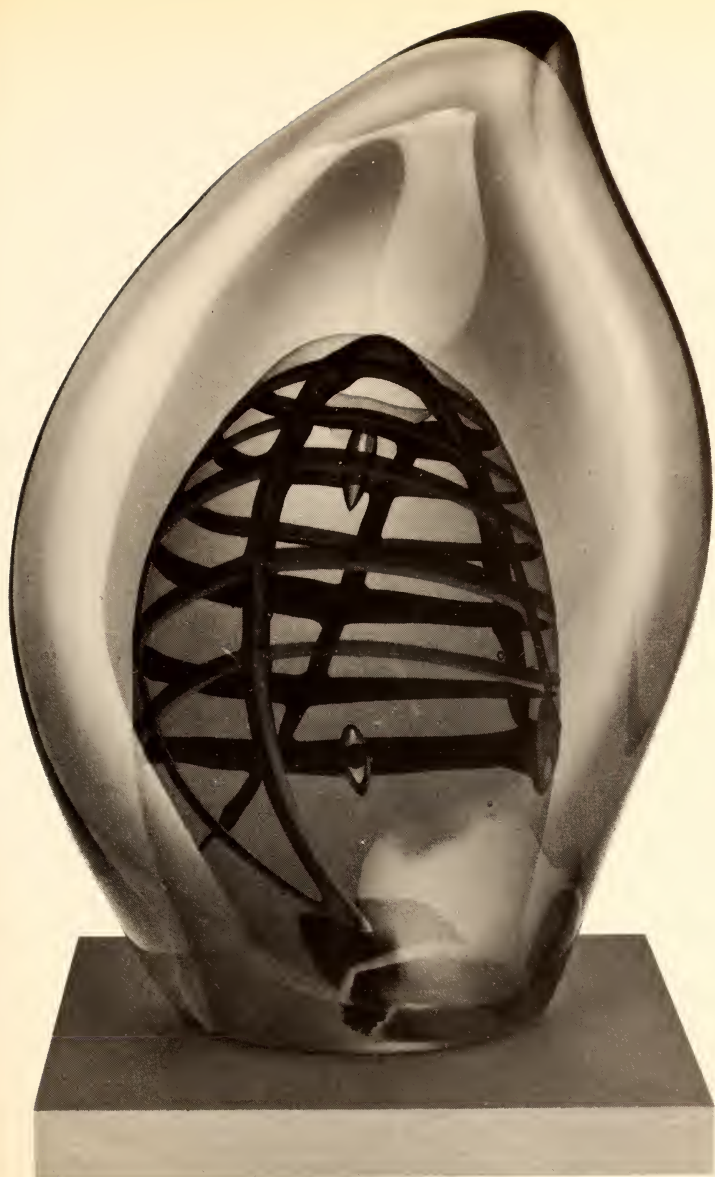


38. Multi-color festoons on opaque white glass, cased in colorless glass. 1972. 10" x 4".



39. Copper red glass continuous prunts.
Iridescent surface.
1972. 7½" x 7½".

40. Forty-one Degrees North.
Hot glass sculpture.
1972. 8" x 5½".





41. Tooled surface sculpture,
iridescent.
1972. 5½" x 5½".



42. Fish-bowl Frolic.
Design on opaque white glass
cased in colorless glass.
1972. 6" x 6".

43. Feathered trailing on opaque white
glass, encased in colorless glass.
1972. 7" x 5¼".





44. *Pale amber glass with
hot-formed design encased.*
1971. 3" x 8½".

45. *Green opal glass,
sculptured and reduced metallic surface.*
1972. 7" x 4".





46. *Deep cobalt blue glass with
textured white prunts.*
1972. 5½" x 5".

47. *Seated Form.*
Hot-cast panel.
1972. 18" x 14".







48. *Conflagration.*
Design on opaque white glass
and cased in colorless glass.
1972. 8" x 5½".

49. *Chalice.* Cobalt and silver glass
with dichroic effect.
1972. 6¼" x 4".



50. Design on opaque white glass
and cased in colorless glass.
1972. 5½" x 3½".



51. Decanter with blue-green dichroic
prints on decanter, stopper, and wine cups.
1972. 10".



52. *Orange and red design
cased in colorless glass.*

1973. 5¼" x 4½".



53. Burgundy glass,
opaque white design,
cased in colorless glass.
1973. 5½" x 3".

54. Cadmium orange flower forms
on opaque white glass,
and cased in colorless glass.
1972. 8" x 5".





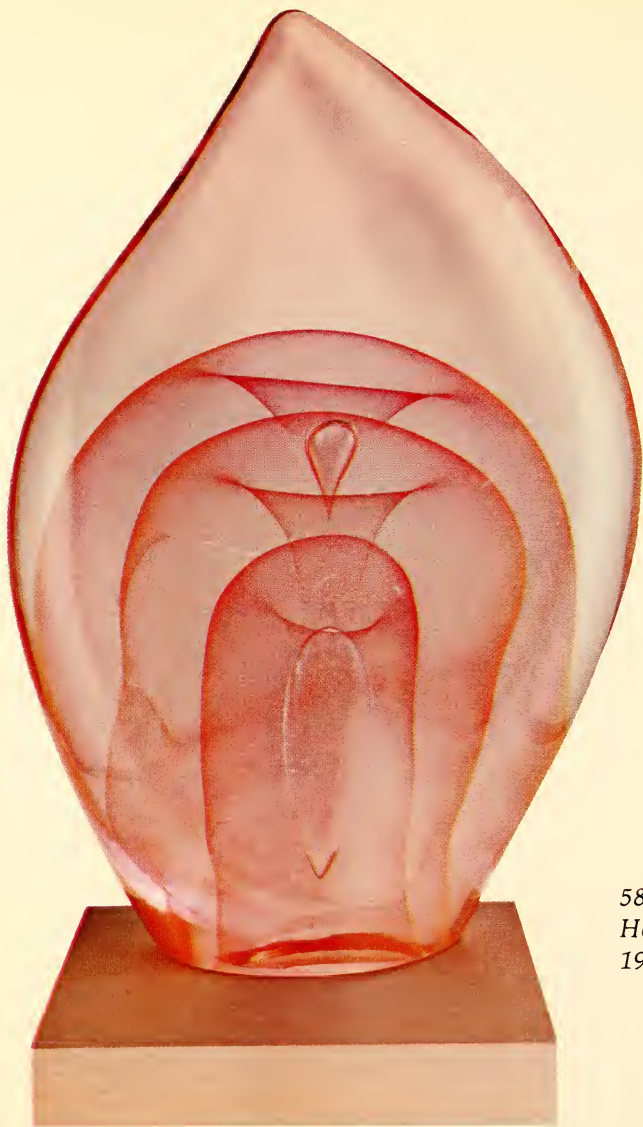


56. Cyclops.
Hot-glass sculpture.
1973. 7½" x 9".



57. Air sculpture on dark purple glass,
cased with colorless glass.
1973. 4¼" x 5".

55. Sea Kingdom.
Hot glass sculpture.
1973. 6" x 5".



58. *Emergence XV.*
Hot glass sculpture. Dichroic.
1973. 10" x 7".

59. *Harlequin.*
Vertical bands of color tooled
and cased in colorless glass.
1973. 6½" x 5".





60. Dark festooning on opaque yellow glass,
cased in colorless glass.
1973. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".



61. Burgundy glass with
applied trailing.
1973. 5" x 5".

62. Hot-tooled design,
cased in colorless glass.
1974. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".







63. *Aerial design against
cobalt and silver
dichroic glass,
cased in colorless glass.*
1973. $3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$.

64. *Swirling design
encased in colorless glass.*
1974. $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{3}{4}''$.



65. Hot-tooled design
cased in color-variant glass.
1974. 8" x 3¼".

66. Hot-tooled design
cased in colorless glass.
1974. 8½" x 5½".





67. Chalice. Multi-colored festooning against an opaque white glass, cased in colorless glass. 1973. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".



68. *Group of paperweights.*
1973-1974.



